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ABSTRACT

An attempt is made to understand the structural and transformational inter-relationships between processes of classification, segmentation, ranking, and segregation in a suburban high school from a cultural point of view. The first of three sections of the paper reviews the acceptance among social scientists in the last decades of the belief that America is not a totally equalitarian society but is stratified into a certain number of classes and of the belief that all men are equal, both contradicted by actual ranking, segregating and stratification processes. Specific examples of segregative and stratifying behaviors were studied in a New York high school. The school appears to have socio-economic and demographic homogeneity, but ways used by teachers to characterize students are noted. Two general sets of acts, those which the school as an institution is entitled to react to and these which lie outside of its jurisdiction, are grouped and diagrammed. To the first set belong matters of scholastic performance and discipline; to the second, matters of socio-biological descent and individual personality. It is argued that what appears to be social class must be considered to be the product of processes which are not organized on class principles and that it is the very democratic ideal which, in certain situations, produces states of being which contradict some aspects of that same ideal. (Author/KSM)

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From grading and freedom of choice to ranking and segregation in an American High School

by

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Not to be quoted

"L'Image d'imagination n'est pas soumise à une vérification par la réalité."[1]
(Bachelard, 1957:89)

The following is an attempt to understand, from a cultural point of view, the structural and transformational interrelationships between processes of classification, segmentation, ranking and segregation in a suburban high school. Some of the events which I shall use as data would be classified by some sociologists as belonging to the domain of stratification, while others would be considered aspects of American mythology. I shall refuse to differentiate a priori between these so-called domains and shall start my analysis from the--cultural--ground up, from the informants' perception of their social world, the quasi-mythical "texts" through which they communicate with each other about each other. The eventual purpose of this research[2] is to provide a unified cultural theory of quality and inequality in the United States that will allow us to go beyond the traditional dichotomy which native American sociologists studying their own society believe they are confronted with, the dichotomy between the myth of democracy and the reality of social classes.

For the last two or three decades, it has been widely accepted among social scientists that America is not a totally equalitarian society but that it is stratified into a certain number of classes. At the same time, it became accepted also that this class

system could be seen within the confines of schools, that adolescents arranged themselves following the way their parents were arranged in the organization of the community. But this "knowledge," by now almost commonsensical, has not always been with us. Indeed the first systematic studies of stratification in the United States, at the town or school level, those of W. L. Warner or A. B. Hollingshead, were couched as "discoveries" of a previously unknown reality. Warner titled one of the initial chapters of the "Yankee City" Series "How the several classes were discovered" (1951; chap. 5: pp 80 ff.). Hollingshead wrote:

> Chapters 1 and 2 [of the book] tell the story of the way the study began;... how we learned that Elmtown had a class system; how each family was located in this class system. (1949:1)

Few scholars seem to have been bothered by the fact that such a thing as a "class system" could remain "unknown" for so long. It had been discovered using the most modern methods, particularly the ethnographical, anthropological method and, of course, native perceptions were irrelevant. But are they really? Doesn't the anthropological method precisely rely first and foremost on the informants' perception, their ability to name the groups which form their social structure and to specify the relationships which exist between them?[3] And even when it can be shown that the natives have a double system, one contradicting the other, as Americans could be said to have, the responsibility of the anthropologist remains to trace the relationship between the two systems.[4]

The dilemma of American studies is well known. On the one hand, the observer is confronted by informants who regularly rehearse

statements to the effect that they believe that all men are equal, that none is inherently better than the others. They say they believe that their institutions reflect this belief and that America is the most complete embodiment of a certain religious and political ideal. On the other hand, the informants seem then to turn around in the same breath and savagely rank each other, deny each other opportunities and segregate their private associations through any means. straightforward or insidious, which they can devise. These processes of stratification have been studied in great detail, at the whole society level as well as at the school level which will interest us here.

Since it had become accepted that schools were stratified, fewer studies were made of the actual process of stratification than of the process by which teachers produce objective differences in achievement through differential treatment and expectation. Furthermore, these are not random but significantly correlated with the place of the parent within the status structure.

All this is well known, and satisfactory as far as it goes. It is inadequate however because it rests on an uncriticized theory of stratification in the United States and by extension in its schools. Stratification is seen purely as the result of unequal access to goods and services compounded by segregative tendencies from the part of those more or less at the same level of the scale against people at other levels. Furthermore, it is denied that stratification as it is empirically seen in a specific situation has anything to do with true ability. If there are objective differences, they are the results of

the stratification process rather than what it is about. If teachers pretend that their evaluation of a child is based on his performance in the classroom, it is retorted to them that they are blinded by their own prejudices, that it is they who create this very difference in performance. If the teachers were not prejudiced, or if the system was not skewed, performance ranking would be spread randomly out throughout all the non-natural categories such as Black and White, rich and poor, which American society and culture have created because, in their "nature" all human beings are equivalent. Nobody seems particularly bothered by the fact that this way of seeing stratification is shot through by individualistic, indeed democratic, ideals too sacred among sociologists to be criticized.

I am not myself going to criticize the notion of the perfect equivalence of human beings. It is very sacred for me too. What I want to say is that we cannot really understand the empirical system of stratification seen in American institutions if we do not go beyond a simple derivation of the ideological premises which we carry in ourselves as natives. We must understand that stratification systems exist within a cultural context, that there is more to them than inequality as the formal definition would restrict them to. We must study them as total social facts including not only statistical evidences of differential treatment but also the total environment, social and ideological in which specific examples of segregative and stratifying behaviors are found.[5]

# # # # # # # # #

The social characteristics of the town of Sheffield[6] in the suburbs of New York City are the results of well documented segregative patterns in housing. It is lily-white, Waspish, clean and sophisticated, expensive and conservative, the proper domain of those who are often called the "upper-middle-class," managers, professionals or owners of small businesses, below the level of the true leaders of the capitalistic world.

Sheffield High School, whose catchment area is exactly co-terminous with this social area, is attended by the sons and daughters of these people. It is rather small--680 students--well supported, mild. It is free from serious tensions, economic or social. It is not to say that students, teachers and administration do not complain. Students are lobbying for an "open campus," teachers do not always feel as supported by the administration as they would like to be, some would like a more open policy with regard to "free days," others complain about financial difficulties which prevent the renewing of textbooks, some gripe about the fact that the high school building is not air-conditioned. The administration is bothered by students smoking in the bathrooms, the rowdiness of the freshman class, the teachers' seeming unwillingness to innovate or just simply to "be reasonable," the superintendent's rigidity on certain administrative questions or the failure of the Kiwanis sponsored "career night."

All these things are grist for the social organizational processes which structure relationships within the high school. They are the material which is used to create a situation of scarcity which allows differential rewarding systems to be put into effect. They are used

to maintain and symbolize a certain social structure while at the same time the fact that these materials do not concern basic survival items makes even unequal relationships rather relaxed. The students know that they are privileged by comparison to most youths from nearby towns. The teachers know that they are among the best paid in their profession and that they have the easiest students to manage that could be found. The administration is deeply satisfied with its staff on the one hand, and with the community on the other.

Yet, however mild the stratification processes that exist in the high school may appear to be by comparison to what happens in other places, they are still at work. In other words, however homogeneous the high school might appear to be from a socio-economic, demographic point of view, absolute equality and/or sameness is not what is evident when one first sees the school, or even after one has come to know it intimately. This is true of the students. This is also true of the teachers who differentiate among themselves, and who are differentiated even more readily by students and administration alike. The Sheffield High School student body, or teacher body, is not an undifferentiated, unified group, it is one that is highly organized. What are the principles of this organization?

As with any other classification system, this one uses events outside of itself, natural, psychological or sociological events, in order to make a basically cultural point.[7] What are these events, and how are they organized? Let us first list haphazardly some of the things which are used by the teachers to characterize students.

- participation or non-participation in sport.

- performance in sports (as measured by the number of points that an individual has contributed to his team).

- participation in extra-curricular activities.

- dress.

- scholastic achievement (as measured either through grades or through performance in tests which are considered "objective").

- will to achieve.

- disruptive/non-disruptive behavior (generally, though not necessarily measured by the frequency of activities that had to be sanctioned formally).

- willingness to cooperate with teachers and administration.

- male/female.

- age and grade (freshman/sophomore/junior/senior).

- "ethnicity" ("nothing" /American/ /Italian/Irish/Black/Chinese/etc.

- poorer to richer.

- healthy to sickly.

- and so on and so forth. . .

All these events[8] can be organized into three broader categories according to the occasions and contexts in which they are used. First, there are things which are considered obvious, inescapable and irrelevant to the mission of the school. Health, wealth, ethnic background, sex, like the color of the eyes or of the hair, the size or the weight, are the biological endowment of the person. As such they are considered to inevitably have some influence on certain behavior, like whom you feel "instinctively" attracted to, whether you can be a member of the basketball team, or whether you use the boys' or the girls' bathroom. But to

let oneself go wholly to those instincts or to judge somebody according to these characteristics is not appropriate for an individual and is illegal for the school as an institution. That one is doing so cannot be openly confessed, except maybe in a joking or angry manner.

The second group of criteria for classification involves performance, scholastic and athletic mostly, though it may also involve performance in the arts, music and drama particularly. This criteria is based on a performance--by opposition to a state of being--or on an act from the part of the student. This performance is "objectively" measured through tests and expressed in grades. The notion of objectivity is important here. It implies that the performance of the student is considered as an object rather than as a subject. In other words, what is judged is not the student's performance in relation to his capacities, his attempt at reaching a certain result, it is the result itself, an object which he has made. The further implication that is made is that it is not the properly human part of the child which is primarily responsible for his grades--though this may enter into account in another way, as we shall see presently. What the tests are supposed to measure is the relationship between what the teacher has taught the child--content-wise--and the child's ability to restate this teaching. Not everybody is expected to perform equally. The tests are indeed designed to measure an aptitude to study. This aptitude is thought to be eventually related to the intelligence of the child which is a given of his biological endowment. The school, from this point of view, is the institution which develops this endowment to its potential and establishes

objective ratings of students for future reference. It is important to note that this classifying process is a matter of absolute ranking from 1 to n, it is not a matter of associating certain students to certain categories. Colleges or employers may decide that they will only accept students with a score above 700, or 600, or whatever, and, in the process, they may create a group or class but the nature of this group or class is not given as constituent of the social world. Only the individual rank is.

The third system of stratification involves things such as dress, spirit, willingness to participate, morale, attitude, etc. These are generally considered by social scientists to be secondary phenomena, used by the informants to express something else than what they appear to be saying, to hide prejudices or to express them. It would thus seem that one should go to the deeper causes rather than to the rhetoric about them. To follow such a route would violate our methodology. For the informants such things as "school spirit," "fair play," "lady-like" appearance, "being dressed like a bum," were real events recognizable in the world. Informants would often disagree among themselves as to whether a particular student was a bum or not, but they knew what each other was saying when he was talking about bums. On the other hand, these events were treated differentially from the two other sets which we explored earlier. There are no tests that can determine how much of a bum, or a lady, a student is. Similarly, being a bum or a lady is not part of the biological or sociological endowment of the student. This makes the classification absolute and subjective, rather than relative and objective. A child was not born with the behavior he is exhibiting

in the high school. And it is not because his parents are bums or nice people that the child himself is one of these things, though of course the parents' example in the home may influence the child in one direction or another. But the child could conceivably change this behavior, willingly or with the help of a psychologist, or under the influence of his peers. Intelligence cannot be improved, but will to learn, morale can. For one reason or another a student may not want to change his behavior to fit a model approved by his interlocutor. He may want to remain a freak in the middle of jocks, or a jock in the middle of freaks. To do so is within his rights, it also makes him responsible for his acts and means that he cannot justifiably complain if certain people do not like his chosen behavior and refuse interaction. It may be improper for a person to segregate out another because of race or wealth, it <u>is</u> proper to do so because the person is not dressed to one's taste, or one just does not "feel good" with the other.

One can see this process as one of restriction in the field of social action. Biological endowment, or performance derived from this endowment, remains non-specific as a determinant for social action. The field is wide open to random association. It gets culturally restricted,and indeed organized in a specifically human way, through those actions in which one, and one's interlocutors, are "free," those which involve life-style decisions. One aspect of this process is passive in so far as one is not specifically penalized for having made a certain choice. At most one is refused participation in certain activities in which one might have wanted to be admitted but to the total atmosphere of which one is not willing, or not able to yield.

But one can also be actively punished for certain life-style decisions. One may decide to smoke in the bathrooms, pull the fire alarm or skip school. For any such acts, or for any others which include the breaking of a formal rule or regulation, the school is entitled to actively punish the child. The school's function is to teach.[9] It can create and enforce regulations which it believes necessary to accomplish this task. It can punish students for performing an act which it believes disruptive. It should not penalize a student for what he "is," but only for certain things which he does--the breaking of rules.

At a more general level, we can see that two sets of acts are recognized by the people in the school, those which the school as an institution is entitled to react to and those which lie outside of its jurisdiction. To the first set belong matters of scholastic performance and discipline, to the second matters of socio-biological descent and matters of individual, psychological personality. As we saw earlier, scholastic achievement is considered to be an aspect of the biological endowment of the child, while discipline is about regulating personality choices. We can summarize the above in the following diagram:

school	biology	personality
outside its domain	race, sex, etc.	life style
within its domain	performance	discipline

From this we can see that the school is interested in one way or another in all aspects of human life, but only in a limited fashion. This of course reflects the more general idea that the school is a piece of society rather than a microcosm of this society. The school as an institution is thus about two subsystems of the more general systems.

The school, however, is not only an institution whose mission is culturally defined, it is also a bunch of people. These people are at the same time in a contractual relationship with the institution and expected to maintain its image of itself, and also, they are human beings entitled in other contexts to behave according to their personality. In other words, teachers, like students, see their realm of action divided into those aspects which are submitted to the institution, and those on which they are fully their own.

The difference between teachers and students is, of course, that the former enforce the definitions while the other submit to them.[10] On the one hand the teacher is an agent of the institution, and thus asked to rank students constantly, on the other hand he is a person who may not rank though he may like or dislike other persons and wish to mingle with them. Outside of school, or with formal equals, e.g. other teachers, this latter right is not problematical: one is not forced to mix with teachers one does not like. Complex patterns of territorial segregation have been developed by teachers to maximize non-teaching time spent with one's clique and minimize contacts with teachers to whom one is indifferent, if not hostile.

With students, the problem is more delicate. Of course, one must not rank them, judge them, except through grade. And this ranking must be accomplished through objective consideration of performance. But one will also, by necessity, be confronted by students which one "doesn't like," "cannot stand," etc., with students whose life-styles one cannot approve of, students who are persons whom one would not want to talk to in a social situation. In other words, a teacher is allowed

to choose the neighborhood in which he lives, the friends he mingles with, the teachers he has lunch with, but he is not allowed to choose his students.

What happens is that the teacher grades the students in the classroom and in his official report to the administration, and that he judges them into "good" or "bad" kinds in his personal relationships with other teachers or with members of the administration. He translates his classifying of students according to their life style choices, and possibly their biological endowment, if he is self-consciously "racist," into his classifying of students according to their grades. It is not only that "students with good grades"--a performance qualification--become "good students"--a life style judgment--, but that the pattern of thought which ranks students according to their grades makes the operator rank them according to their life style. A student with good grades may be a good student for certain teachers and a bad student for others. The process goes, of course, even further than a moral evaluation of students. This judgment is further transformed into an unequal rewarding system in terms of minor privileges which are given by teachers to their "good" students. R. Riffle, in his paper, gives examples of some of the types of privileges which the school is entitled to distribute and he hints at some of the ways in which these are allocated to the students, sometimes according to formal criteria derived from performance and at other times according to other criteria which may be considered to derive from prejudice.[11] There are also the somewhat unconscious processes which make teachers "expect" differential

performance from students who they have pegged a priori as "good" or "bad" and thus generate it by this very expectation. Such processes have been documented at length in the educational literature.

Structurally, the process is one by which two classification systems which we can visualize as two axis, one horizontal for a segregating scale, one vertical for a grading scale, are transformed by operators in ambiguous situations into a stratification scale. Distinctions which are very clear in the school charters, administration and regulations, become much more fuzzy when used by actual people. Carry overs cannot but happen, and so it is recognized by the natives. It is widely admitted that to compartmentalize successfully the different ranking systems so that your choice on one scale does not influence your choice on another scale is very difficult and a feat out of the reach of most individuals. It consequence, complex systems have thus been developed to ensure that the legal ranking, the development of which is the goal of the school, be effectuated as "objectively" as possible. The most important test in the school life of the students, the College Board Tests, are administered by agencies outside the school. Of course, by this time, whatever influence the prejudices of the teachers may have had on the intellectual development of the child, the damage is probably already done.

What is interesting for us here is what this recourse to a non-personal arbitrator implies. It implies a desire for objectivity about certain things. It implies a definition of those things about which one can and need be objective. It implies a recognition that there may be situations when attitudes which cannot be objective may carry over

into judgments that should be. A person cannot be a machine even though the formal situation in which he is put, demands that he indeed behave like a machine, with absolute neutrality. And it is as a person that he says "this kid is terrible," "this kid is a good kid."

We must go even further in this attempt to understand the actual process of stratification. Teachers may be prejudiced, often violently, against certain students. They often have little knowledge of the friendship or clique relationships which pertain among the students. In other words, they see students as individuals rather than as members of groups. This might not have been evident in a school with strong ethnic groups. In Sheffield it was particularly clear that teachers, most of whom did not live in town, and did not know the parents, had very little understanding of the social life of the children, even of those who were the most popular with the teachers. They knew that kids had friends, they were anxious that they have some, they did not generally see their kids as members of little groups or cliques. Kids were "good" or "bad" according to a certain pattern of behavior which they as individuals had.

This sould remind us of the individual nature of the process of scholastic grading and ranking. If groups of kids are created according to performance, it is a secondary process that is not relevant to the structure itself. The processes which we have identified are of a transformational nature in which informants are confronted by two sets of rules for behavior adapted to two predefined social contexts. These rules, however, leave the operators in the dark in certain situations which can be interpreted as pertaining to both contexts. This allows the operator to use whatever set of rules he prefers, psychologically,

or is pressured into using, sociologically. The result of the process is a surface structure which may include a set of more or less well defined "classes". But these exist only as products of a process. superficial manifestations of a deeper structure. To consider them as possessing a reality of their own is misleading. It is particularly misleading when the supposed existence of cliques or classes is considered evidence that a social situation in America is not as individualistic or as democratic as people consider it to be. In fact, it may be the precisely individualistic and democratic nature of the processes which make them produce the empirical results which we, as observers, are confronted with.

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Let us now summarize my argument up to here. I have argued that the field of interaction of an American is divided into two areas. In one of them what I shall call segregative processes--those which derive from statements of the type "I like"/"I don't like" this person--are at play in a fully legitimate manner. In the other field, the person is asked to rank other persons and to reward them differentially, but only within a limited domain that is clearly defined in a mutually understood contract. On some occasions the two fields are clearly differentiated. The rater of a test, for example, does not have to worry whether the person he is rating is "good" or "bad." He can be completely detached. Indeed he can be replaced by a machine, what can be considered as the outer limit of objectivity.

In contrast, the student who goes to sit at a table rather than at another because "that's where his friends are" is not rating, he is just segregating. He does not have to assume that the others are bad,

just that he does not like them. Indeed, cliques abound in the school, but there is no competition between them as such. Territories are assigned to certain cliques, and the other cliques would not openly challenge their right to that territory. The process is the same among teachers. They, too, have their cliques and their territories and relationships of tense equality are maintained between the cliques. When a clique, either among the teachers or among the students, comes to desire something which another clique possesses, it can only get it through an appeal to a member of the administrative level above itself using as a tool whatever it is that this higher level is entitled to judge and to reward differentially, be it creative teaching or academic performance. One cannot claim a privilege by arguing one's life style but only by demonstrating that one will use the privilege in a manner that is a more complete performance of the things which that level is supposed to do. Cliques, or rather their members, may be unequal among themselves in relationship to certain types of gratification, they may be hierarchically related to an institution in a specific domain, they are certainly not in a hierarchical relationship towards one another. The relationship between them is one of avoidance and ignorance, it involves no exchange, it is not reciprocal. It is a relationship which involves separate, substantive entities which are inherently "the same," and thus equal.

The equality I am talking about here is of course of a different nature from the equality which some critics of the United States social system call for. In the school, the units, individuals or cliques, are not equal in relation to a scale but in relation to themselves as they get ready to be ranked. It is not an equality of relation--since in fact

all the unites are ranked--but an equality of substance--all the units are the same and are ranked according to the same principles.

We are rediscovering here certain choices which America as a whole has made over and over again. Equality in front of the law, "one man--one vote" laws, all imply the same definitions of humanity and social action as those we have seen emerging from our analyses of processes of ranking and classification in a high school. The basic choice of America is that "men have been created equal," not that they should or will remain so from a social point of view, all through their lives. The notion of competition, which is another aspect of the notion of ranking, is central to many aspects of American culture and well demonstrates the limits which are put to "equality."

But in fact, as one reads between the lines of what many critics of American life write, one sees that what they are objecting to is not so much that people, or kids, are actually ranked, but that the ranking process is in one way or another skewed in favor of a certain group and against another one. What those critics are really saying is that there is not place in American for encompassing groups. The ideal to which they compare the statistical reality which they observe is a state in which each rank is filled by people from all categories of Americans--they are talking here about the "objective" categories which are the same as those I delineated earlier--in a truly random fashion. This is the same ideal which the people in the school attempted to reach, except that is was of course more difficult for them to reach it than the critics say it is, since principal, teachers and students are confronted by a total social situation, rather than by a small aspect

artificially taken outside of its context. R nking is never found by itself, it is always associated with freedom of choice and our responsibility as social scientists is to investigate the dialectics of the two.

To say that the critics have misdirected their attacks, that in fact they are simply restating the myths rather than attacking them, is not to say that the present American system is ideal. As Merleau-Ponty once wrote:

> "Nous savons aujourd'hui que l'égalité formelle des droits et la liberté politique masquent les rapports de force plutôt qu'elles ne les suppriment." (1966:180)[12]

This indictment of the system is much more radical than that of people like Hollingshead or Warner. It is a denial of the value of the myth rather than a complain that the myth of democracy has not been fulfilled. Merleau-Ponty was, of course, arguing in the article in which he wrote the sentence I just quoted, in favor of an idealized Marxist society. From this vantage point he could see the inescapable tension that exists within a classical democratic society. In the same way as we believe, as anthropologists, that our model of foreign societies are more adequate than the native ones because of our distance from them, we have to create a distance between us as social scientists and us as natives when we are talking about societies in which we have been born and raised.

It could be argued that the models of American society proposed by people like Warner and Hollingshead, all the models which attempt to picture this society in terms of well organized classes are but the creation of another false consciousness, more insidious because it appears grounded in Science, one of our most sacred domains. Social classes, we

saw, do not explain behavior in Sheffield High School. The apparition of something which looks like social classes, either statistically or in the speech of informants must be considered to be an epiphenomenon, the product of more general processes which are not organized on class principles. Indeed it is the very democratic ideal which allows the individual to chose his social partners--an ideal profoundly valued in an institution like marriage--which, in certain situations produces states of being which go against some aspects of the ideal. For an American, to fail to recognize this is to illusion himself into believing that those unequal results are not the product of something he wishes to continue to value.

New York, November 26, 1973

Notes

1) "The image of imagination is not submitted to empirical verification" (my translation).

2) I began this work with a rather programmatic paper on "Culture and Stratification in an Equalitarian Civilization" (1974) where I delt with some of the theoretical problems raised by the cultural approach to the study of human behavior and with some of the empirical problems raised by a traditional approach to stratification in the United States.

3) The foremost influence on Warner's early work had been Radcliff-Brown's. But even though this one was interested in "real relations," an interest picked up by Warner, he also believed that the social relationships which he analysed as being central to the nature of the system, would be recognizable in terminological, classificatory systems which the natives used (19 8). For him, what the natives say may often be difficult to interpret, it is never irrelevant, nor is it ever "false."

4) Lévi-Strauss has argued in several instances, about the Bororo social structure, about the myth of Asdiwal, that the model of his society which an informant may first give, or which he elaborates in his myths, may not correspond at all with an actual state of affair (1958, 19 0). He also argues that this does not make the mythical model less interesting to analyze and, more importantly, it leaves us with the task of finding how the two models are interrelated.

5) The strongest statement in favor of seeing stratification systems differentially from the point of view of their internal organization, rather than as a simple matter of inequality, has been made by Dumont (19 1). He argues there in favor of seeing the Indian caste system on the one hand, and the American so-called "class system" as two qualitatively different systems that must be understood primarily in relation to themselves and their cultural contexts, rather than in relation to an abstract scale of relative deprivation of certain people vis à vis other people.

6) I want to take the occasion here to thank the other members of the team who worked with me in Sheffield and to whose work I am deeply indebted, Patricia Caesar and Rodney Riffle. I want also to express my gratitude to those who have listened to my early formulations, James Boon, Carlos Dabezies, Beth Haggens, and especially my wife, Susan.

7) I am not saying here that, when human beings classify, they use objective criteria of the thing or person classified. But, following Lévi-Strauss (19 2a, 19 2b), I am saying that, in order to express the "differential gaps" /écarts différentiels/ which men have to create among themselves to understand their society and speak about it, they will always relate the categories thus formed to other categories that have been made in the non-human world. But "non-human" does not mean necessarily "natural." Some societies organize human relations according to the social functions which it recognizes. There is nothing

theoretically surprising in finding cultures in which men's characterizations are symbolically expressed in relation to psychological tendencies or biological items.

8) It should be evident that for me all these events are interesting in so far as they are used in a cultural system for cultural purposes. I am not saying anything as to their "real" value within their own systems, social, psychological, or biological.

9) It might be argued that I am overly limiting the function of the school. Some informants will say on certain occasions that its function is also to teach the kid "how to be a member of society." This is of course quite different from teaching mathematics and French. In fact the institution as a whole is not really geared to "teach " the very abstract and non-objective "subject" of "being social." It appears mostly to be considered a side benefit of learning math and French. And yet, if we were to analyze what is meant by "being a member of society" we would find the same organization of elements that we have outlined, though at a more general level in which the items of being and doing are less sharply defined.

10) We must note here that teachers are like students in their relationships with the administration in so far as they are regularly rated by it on their performance as teachers within the restricted definition of what a teacher's role is. I do not have the time here to expand on this parallelism.

11) See in this issue pp. 000-000.

12) "We know today that formal equality of rights and political freedom hide rather than suppress power relationships" (my translation).

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